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"Kathryn Garcia, Gavlak Los Angeles," Artillery, September 23, 2020.

artillery

Kathryn Garcia

Gavlak Los Angeles



Gallery view courtesy of Gavlak Los Angeles

Exploring the potency of deep, elemental feminine power and the quality of female corporeality that for many folks evokes a certain kind of planetary magic, Kathryn Garcia joins the ranks of artists across generations whose works have sought to give tangible form to this particular kind of energy. In *The Feminine Divine* — a suite of paintings, sculptures, and performance-based video — we encounter resonance with canonical practitioners like Judy Chicago, Hilma af Klint, and Ana Mendieta — but with a mindfully lighter, even minimalistic, aesthetic.

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Garcia's paintings, which are actually colored pencil on a paper somehow actually called "stonehenge" are all the same size and basic layout, and so despite the variations between compositions, their regimented array around the gallery feels holistic, like an image cycle more than a selection of singular works. While these works very legibly present the hyper-stylized breasts and vulvic V of ancient cultural archetypes, they are much less intensely imagic and colored than Chicago's similar forays. In their perfected shapes and pared-down fundamental forms, they speak also the macro/micro music of the spheres which captivated at Klint, also profoundly informed by her interest in Theosophical teachings as to the underlying patterns of the universe.



Hypogea (2019) has the most drama in its palette, with strengthened reds and blue-grays; most of the others are a diaphanous icy palette of white and blues, with misty auric hints of green and red, just enough sketched in to create a sense of dimension or space. These chromatic whispers interceded with the organic in what are otherwise pared down, vertically symmetrical schematics — clearly based on female anatomy, especially her sex parts, with the hardline, diaphanous presence of architectural renderings. At 50 x 38 inches, they feel quite nearly life-size — reinforcing the overall sense that these are priestess guardians arrayed in a magic circle.

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This overall effect is further amplified by the sculptural objects arranged on the floor — a central steel-rod pyramid (*Templo*) with raw lapis lazuli at its edge, which one confronts and must either enter or skirt around when entering the gallery, and a number of small, geometrical objects, high-polished stainless steel diamond-shaped geodes that announced themselves as ritual objects in their shimmering, seductive, transhumanist strangeness. These, or others just like them, feature prominently in the video work *2020*, in which Garcia performs a ritual of earth, air, water, sun, and ocean magic on the rocky coast of Ibiza. Her image is overlaid with archive footage of early cultures' goddess iconography, at one point depicting the body emerging, a la Mendieta, from a dugout into the earth. But here Garcia's agenda of achieving balance rather than assuming control makes itself felt in the intimate, personal gestures which she enacts like an offering.